Women are encouraged to get training in Food Processing & Training Centres (FPTCs) with a view to upgrading skills and instil confidence in them to engage themselves profitably in food processing industries.

Effect of WTO ruling against EU

934. SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether a recent WTO Ruling against EU's provision of Trade preferences (Drug Window) will positively impact on export of Indian Textiles *vis-a-vis* Pakistan;

(b) what steps, if any, have been taken to ensure the cost and quality competitions of Indian textiles as compared with Chinese and Bangladesh exports;

(c) what specific measures, if any, have been taken or contemplated by the Government to increase the global market share for Indian sellers; and

(d) whether Government proposes to make legislative changes with respect to the various statutory enactments that regulate silk and textiles industries in India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) Yes, Sir. However, the ruling is yet to be adopted by the Dispute Settlement Body.

(b) and (c) Government has been taking a number of steps to ensure cost and quality competitiveness of Indian's textile products and to increase their global market share. Some of the important initiatives taken are:

(i) The Government has de-reserved the woven segment of readymade garment from the SSI sector. It has also raised the SSI investment limit for knitted segment to Rs. 5 crores.

(ii) The Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme (TUFS) has been made operational from 1-4-1999 to facilitate the modernisation and upgradation of the sector.

(iii) Weaving, processing and garment machinery, which are covered under TUFS, have been extended the facility of accelerated

depreciation at the rate of 50%. Cost of machinery has also been reduced through Fiscal Policy measures. This further encourages modernisation.

(iv) With a view to making fabric production competitive, the custom duty on shuttless looms has been brought from 15% to 5%.

(v) National Institute for Fashion Technology (NIFT), its six branches and Apparel Training & Design Centres (ATDCs) are running various courses/programmes to meet skilled manpower requirements of textile industry especially apparel in the field of design, merchandising and marketing.

(vi) Facilities by way of eco-testing laboratories have been created to enable exporters to get the garments/textiles pre-tested for conforming to the requirements of importing countries.

(vii) The Government has launched a centrally sponsored scheme titled "Apparel Park for Export Scheme" for imparting focused thrust for setting up of apparel manufacturing units of international standards at potential growth centres and to give fillip to exports.

(viii) For upgrading infrastructure facilities at important textile centers, a scheme " Textile Centre Infrastructure Development Scheme" (TCIDS) has been launched.

(d) The Government is already pursuing a Policy of de-regulation and de-control and would make legislative proposals, if and when required, to meet the emerging situation.

Import of Silk

935. PROF. M.M. AGARWAL: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity of silk imported in the country during the last three years;

(b) the amount of foreign exchange spent on the import of silk; and

(c) the details of schemes formulated by Government so far to stop the increasing import of silk and to produce it in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) and (b) The details of quantum of silk imported in the country and amount of foreign exchange spent on import of silk during the last three years are as under:—